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Again, thank you, the students of Calhoun Middle School for your kindheartedness and thoughtfulness. Your words strongly conveyed the spirit of the American people and our commitment to build relations with countries dedicated to combating global terrorism.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROGER
CAZARES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 2004

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate Roger Cazares upon the occasion of his retirement as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC) Project, a multi-purpose social service agency (with a successful 39 year history of serving various communities throughout San Diego County).

After graduating from San Diego State University with a Political Science Degree, Roger headed to the MAAC Project. Thirty years later, he leaves MAAC as one of the most successful social service agencies in the country with 400 employees, an annual operating budget of over \$16 million and over \$100 million in assets.

Under Roger Cazares' leadership MAAC Project has become an agency that serves over 35,000 individuals per year and staffs 35 sites bringing to its constituents empowering social services, health components, a state of arts charter school, technology centers, economic development, and affordable housing. Roger is a man with a vision that has empowered his staff at the MAAC Project to serve as many people as possible and not be afraid to expand to new services. Roger's legacy at the agency includes creating new leaders by mentoring a younger generation and inspiring them to believe in their potential.

The growth that the MAAC Project has seen under Roger's tenure includes an increase in the agency's North San Diego County Head Start Child Development schools center sites from 4 to 17. Enrollment at these centers went up from 400 to 1,100 children, directly impacting parental participation and involvement in those children's lives. Thanks to Roger's direction MAAC established two residential care facilities for recovering drug and alcohol dependent individuals housed at Casa de Milagros, for women, and Casa Nosotros, for men. Roger Cazares ensured MAAC's summer employment for over 1,000 South Bay youth annually, in cooperation with the Private Industry Council. The MAAC also provided English as a second language and government classes to over 12,000 adults in San Diego County through the Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986 for 5 years.

Roger has made an impact in the community not only by augmenting social services that local government provides but also by becoming involved in the Housing Crisis that San Diego County faces. Roger Cazares created

the agency's Housing and Community Development Department in 1991 that has developed more than 1,000 rental units of affordable housing and 12 single family homes, developed, a community development strategy specifically targeting the residents of MAAC's apartment communities, and recently expanded the department to include a property management component. Under Mr. Cazares' leadership, MAAC Project has grown to be one of the premier affordable housing developers in the region.

Roger Cazares also has left his footprint in the education arena by providing leadership and harnessing his national network for support to fund and open MAAC Community Charter School in Chula Vista. The Charter School is a first class operation that offers hope and opportunity for our deserving youth.

Roger's contributions to the community go beyond the MAAC Project. He was president of the National City Chamber of Commerce from 1994–1995; he served on the National Council of La Raza Board of Directors and Executive Committee for six years. Roger has received a multitude of awards for his community service such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Business Leadership Award, Hispanic Heritage Local Heroes Award presented by KPBS & Union Bank of California, the United Way Ben Polak Community Service Award, the UCSD Excellence in Community Service Award, recipient of Reconocimiento OHTLI Community Service Award presented by the Mexican Government.

Roger is joined in celebrating his accomplishments by his wife and lifelong partner of 30 years, Norma Cazares; their daughters Leticia and Nicole; and their son Javier. My best wishes go to my friend Roger Cazares, a visionary, an activist, a great leader, and a good man.

TRIBUTE TO MINISTER BRUCE
RIVERA

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 2004

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a committed community activist and advocate Minister Bruce Rivera, a resident of my district who has been committed to improving the community in which he was born and raised, will soon be celebrating his ordination in the United Church of Christ.

Minister Rivera was born and raised in the South Bronx. He attended the public school system in the city of New York, and after graduation, he joined the United States Air Force. He served his nation with distinction, and earned both the Purple Heart and the Cross of Gallantry for his actions during the conflict in Beirut. After five years in the armed services, Minister Rivera returned to the community in which he was raised.

He immediately transferred that same tenacity and dedication to country to his efforts in the local community, becoming committed to improving the South Bronx. He founded South Bronx Churches, an ecumenical organization that has built more than 800 homes in the South Bronx. He also founded the Boston Road Association for Community Empowerment, which serves the interests of more than

700 families in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. He continues to keep himself involved in the community and the city, as a member of the local community planning board, the Chaplain for the 42nd Police Precinct Community Council, and as a Management Analyst at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Since becoming licensed in the Gospel ministry, Minister Rivera has worked on a dizzying array of ecumenical projects. He ministers to inmates at Rikers Island and the Downstate Correctional Custody Facility. His work with police officers after the events of September 11th recently won him recognition from both the City Council and the NYPD.

Mr. Speaker, Minister Rivera has typified the ideals of dedication and compassion. For twenty years, he has worked to improve the lives of countless individuals in the South Bronx. Minister Rivera has been selfless of his time and his talents, and the Bronx is better for it.

Minister Rivera could not have accomplished all of these things without the love and support of his wife, Maria, and his son Bruce Anthony.

Mr. Speaker, Minister Bruce Rivera is a fine example of a great community leader and a person dedicated through his faith to helping others. I am grateful to have such a deeply committed person doing his good work in my district. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring his past achievement and in anticipating many great things to come.

HONORING FLORENCE ELEMEN-
TARY SCHOOL'S AMERICAN SPIRIT
TOWARD THE VICTIMS OF
THE BESLAN SCHOOL TRAGEDY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 2004

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to say thank you to one of my hometown schools, Florence Elementary School in Southlake, Texas. The students of Florence enthusiastically participated in a card giving program for the victims of the Beslan school tragedy.

Before departing for my mission to Russia, I asked several local schools if they would like to create, draw, color or write greeting cards to the survivors and grieving families. The response was overwhelming. I was honored to be able to present hundreds of colorful cards to patients and families.

During my time in Russia, I had the opportunity to visit survivors recuperating at two hospitals. The visits were moving and tearful, but you could see the hearts of American students truly shining in the eyes of the Russian children. I was truly privileged to represent the United States, and especially grateful to be able to share wonderful cards full of encouragement and joy.

Again, thank you, the students of Florence Elementary School for your kindheartedness and thoughtfulness. Your words strongly conveyed the spirit of the American people and our commitment to build relations with countries dedicated to combating global terrorism.